

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0527

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: RABIN GROUP PLANS ART EXHIBIT IN LENINGRAD

REF: 76 MOSCOW 18278, LENINGRAD 043

1. SUMMARY. THE MOSCOW DISSIDENT ART SCENE IS AGAIN IN FLUX, WITH THE SMALL GROUP LED BY OSKAR RABIN CONTINUING TO OPPOSE THE EFFORTS OF MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD AUTHORITIES TO CO-OPT AND "TAME" UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS. THE RABIN GROUP HOPES TO GAIN SUPPORT BY STAGING AN "APARTMENT EXHIBIT" IN LENINGRAD JAN 18; 38 PAINTERS HAVE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE QUIET STRUGGLE CONTINUES BETWEEN MOSCOW CULTURAL AUTHORITIES AND THE RABIN GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS. RABIN HIMSELF SEEMS TO HAVE SHAKEN OFF HIS EARLIER INCLINATION TO GIVE UP THE FIGHT. THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE OUR LAST REPORT ON THIS TOPIC (REFTEL):

--ACTIVE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIRST OFFICIAL EXHIBIT OF THE NEWLY-FGMED PAINTERS' SECTION OF THE MOSCOW CONFIDENTIAL

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UNION OF GRAPHIC ARTISTS BEGAN ON DEC 1, WHEN A COMMISSION OF ARTISTS HEADED BY GRABITSKIY MET TO REVIEW WORKS OF ART FOR EXHIBIT;

--ABOUT 200 ARTISTS, MOSTLY UNOFFICIAL, TURNED OUT FOR THIS PRELIMINARY REVIEW, EACH BRINGING TWO OR THREE WORKS. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE (RABIN GROUP MEMBER YOSIF

KIBLITSKIY), A NUMBER OF ARTISTS WERE DISGRUNTLED AT THE IDEA OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP AND WERE ALSO DISPLEASED THAT NONE OF THE BENEFITS EARLIER PROMISED BY THE UNION HAD MATERIALIZED;

--THE COMMISSION REJECTED THE PAINTINGS OFFERED BY OSKAR RABIN AND BY KIBLITSKIY, ALTHOUGH IT ACCEPTED THREE WORKS BY RABIN'S SON SASHA;

--THE OFFICIAL MOSCOW EXHIBIT HAS NOT YET TRANSPIRED, HOWEVER; KIBLITSKIY BELIEVES THIS IS BECAUSE IN THE EYES OF THE CULTURAL AUTHORITIES MOSCOW'S UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS ARE TOO DIVIDED AMONG THEMSELVES FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO RISK STAGING IT.

3. MEANWHILE, RABIN AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN "ENERGIZED" BY THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS:

LENINGRAD DISSIDENT VLADIMIR FILIMONOV RECENTLY WAS SENTENCED TO A YEAR AND ONE-HALF IN PRISON FOR "HOOLIGANISM;"

--FILIMONOV'S WIFE ATTEMPTED TO CIRCULATE A PETITION IN HIS BEHALF AMONG UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS IN BOTH LENINGRAD AND MOSCOW, BUT TO HER DISMAY SHE WAS ABLE TO GET ONLY ONE SIGNATURE (OVCHINNIKOV) IN LENINGRAD AND ONLY SEVEN (MOSTLY MEMBERS OF THE RABIN GROUP) IN MOSCOW;

--THIS MEAGER RESPONSE REPORTEDLY INFURIATED RABIN, WHO, CONFIDENTIAL

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TOGETHER WITH KIBLITSKIY, COMPOSED AND CIRCULATED AN OPEN LETTER (LENINGRAD 043) WHICH SCOLDED UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS FOR THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO AID A "COMRADE" IN DISTRESS AND WHICH ALSO DIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE NEW OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR ARTISTS IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD.

4. RABIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES THEN DECIDED TO ORGANIZE AN "APARTMENT EXHIBIT" IN HOPES OF WINNING SOME UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS AWAY FROM THE CULTURAL AUTHORITIES IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD. A SUITABLE APARTMENT COULD NOT BE FOUND IN MOSCOW; IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED TO USE THE LENINGRAD APARTMENT OF PHYSICIST KAZARINOV, WHOSE WIFE REPORTEDLY IS ACTIVE IN THAT CITY'S UNOFFICIAL ART SCENE. THE SHOW IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN ON JAN 18, IT WILL BE OPEN TO ALL EXHIBITORS, WITHOUT CENSORSHIP, AND HAS BEEN PLANNED TO COINCIDE WITH A LONDON ART SHOW WHICH WILL FEATURE WORKS OF SOVIET ARTISTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF SOVIET EMIGRE ALEKSANDR GLEZER. KIBLITSKIY HAS LINED UP 38 ARTISTS

THUS FAR.

5. OUR SOURCE NOTED THAT THE LENINGRAD KGB IS REPUTED TO BE TOUGHER THAN ITS MOSCOW COUNTERPART, AND THAT ROMANOV IS KNOWN TO HAVE TAKEN A HARD LINE TOWARDS LOCAL DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES. RABIN AND KIBLITSKIY FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT THE CARROT AND STICK TACTICS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY THE REGIME TO BRING UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS INTO LINE MUST BE CHALLENGED, AND THAT THE LENINGRAD EXHIBIT IS THE BEST AVAILABLE MEANS FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS.

6. RABIN PLANS TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE FRIDAY, JAN 14, TO EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THE LENINGRAD EXHIBIT. THE RABIN GROUP THEN INTENDS TO DEPART FOR LENINGRAD, PAINTINGS IN HAND, JAN 16. MEANWHILE, THE HOME TELEPHONES OF RABIN AND KIBLITSKIY SUDDENLY WERE DISCONNECTED JAN 11, APPARENTLY IN A REGIME EFFORT TO

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COMPLICATE ORGANIZATION OF THE LENINGRAD SHOW AND PREVENT DIRECT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE RABIN GROUP AND ORGANIZERS OF THE JAN 18 LONDON ART EXHIBIT.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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